31. Measures for redressing the grievances of the people on account of economic depression.

MR. K. P. MARTANDAN VAIDYAN (*Chirayinkil taluk, Group II*) said that the world wide economic depression has not spared Travancore. Every Government was endeavouring to find out ways and means for removing the depression and the Travancore Government also should make every effort to relieve the people of their economic distress. The following were the suggestions made by the member in this behalf :—

(1) The prices of local agricultural products had gone down considerably and the people of Travancore whose mainstay was agriculture were in consequence much affected economically. The first thing to be done by the Government was therefore to find out proper markets abroad for local products, chief of them being pepper, *copra* and *coir*. Facilities should also be afforded to export these articles and import articles of food to the best advantage of Travancoreans.

(2) Several ryots found it difficult to pay the tax due on their lands. The order suspending coercive processes for the recovery of revenue passed towards the end of 1106 did not serve the purpose intended as it was passed after the demand notices had been issued to all the defaulters and withdrawn at the beginning of the year 1107. The order that demand notice fees realised in 1106 should be adjusted in 1107 was not followed in practice. Several properties were sold for arrears of tax. The Government should therefore suspend the issue of demand notices, give up the processes of distraining and selling immovable property for arrears of tax and remit a certain percentage of the tax due on land.

(3) The school fees should be reduced by 25 per cent.

(4) The Retrenchment Committee had recommended reduction of expenditure on public works. This was not a wise recommendation. More amounts should be provided for public works and all necessary works in each taluk should be taken in hand at once and got done by local inhabitants. This step would help to provide labour for a large number of poor people. While on the subject of public works the member urged the need for the following works in the Chirayinkil taluk: —

(i) a road from Kakankunnu to Akattummuri railway station ;

(ii) a road from Nilakkamukku to the Kayikkara ferry ;

(iii) a bridge across the Kayikkara ferry ;

(iv) improvements to the Warkalai-Paripalli road and the construction of two culverts thereon ; and

(v) a road from Kuruvikalavu to Kappil.

(5) The money required for the public works should be found by reducing the salaries of officers drawing Rs. 50 and above and superannuation pensions of Rs. 100 and above by 10 per cent. and also by borrowing money from the Government temples where money has been stored.

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(6) All superannuated officers enjoying extensions of service should be immediately retired and in the last vacancies caused thereby fresh graduates appointed. Several poor families would be benefited by the adoption of this policy.

(7) Much hardship was being experienced by the merchants on account of the manner in which income tax was recovered from them. Instances were not wanting where those who had assessable incomes escaped assessment while others who had no such incomes were assessed. Representations in this respect were often in vain. Further, it was hard to recover income tax from *coir* merchants, *copra* merchants, etc., in times of economic distress. This tax should be suspended in their case without detriment to their franchise to the Legislative Council and other public institutions.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Martandan Vaidyan, your suggestions, like those of the previous speaker, cover a very wide field ; and I can only say that they will be carefully considered in the attempts that we are making both to remove the economic depression and also to reduce expenditure.

32. The present economic condition of the ryots of Nanjinad and measures to be adopted for improving the same.

MR. S. AZHAKIANAYAKAM PILLAI (*Agastisvaram taluk*) said that agriculture was the mainstay of the people of Travancore and that therefore the prosperity and advancement of the State depended upon the development of agriculture and the prosperity of the agriculturists. No doubt the Government, with the object of developing agriculture and increasing the welfare of the people, have organised an Agricultural Department and a Public Works Department, afforded facilities for the grant of agricultural loans and opened a Land Mortage Bank. But the officers did not pay much attention to know and redress the real grievances of the agriculturists. Whenever the superior officers went on tour they camped in chief centres and never cared to visit interior villages and ascertain the real condition of the agriculturists. The member therefore suggested that in every taluk all the officers of the Tahsildar's status and above should be asked to visit every village, ascertain the condition of agriculture and the economic position of the agriculturists and submit periodical reports which might be either monthly or half yearly.

The rates of assessment on the lands in Nanjinad were high. This coupled with the fall in the price and yield drove the ryots to borrow money even for paying the *kist*. The tax should therefore be reduced taking into consideration the price of paddy, the yield of the lands and the probable returns to the cultivator.

The measures in use in Nanjinad were not uniform. The grain measure should be standardised and measures should be made and stamped by the Government and sold to the public. Those who used other measures should be prosecuted. The same subject had been represented at the previous session of the Assembly also.

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